




**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT
FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

DIVERSE LEARNEERS

**SEGMENT #5: COLLABORATING WITH OTHER
EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS**



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Professional Development Toolkit for New and Beginning Teachers



The PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS is a research-based video streamed program with accompanying resource documents. The program is an outgrowth of a previous Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) online mentoring study at Virginia Commonwealth University. The findings of the online mentoring study revealed twelve topics new and beginning teachers felt additional university training would have led them to more effective use of best practices in the classroom. In this program, each of the twelve topics is presented in two to six stand alone video segments. The total number of segments is forty five. Suggested uses, in addition to personal viewing by K-12 teachers for self improvement, include professional development, mentor and mentee, university prospective teacher, and small or large group training.

The facilitators are university faculty and practitioners with field experience. Each is currently involved in teacher training or serves as a staff development administrator. All are currently engaged in educational research, teaching and/or educational policy development.

The teachers in the video programs are classroom teachers. Some of them were participants in the 2006 Online Mentoring Study in which the topics for this project were identified. They represent all disciplines in K-12 grades.

Resource documents for the programs are provided as PDF files to facilitate the use of the 45 videos. The first set of documents is: (1) an introduction to the project, (2) an introduction to program facilitators including a listing of segments under the topics by title, and (3) a research formative study summary that helped to guide the project's development. The second set of documents is: (1) an introduction to the project, (2) a full text transcript for each video segment, (3) problems and solutions related to each video segment in the form of a work-study guide, and (4) an annotated bibliographic summary of references and Internet links for each transcript. Many of the organizations and agencies referenced in the transcripts are actively involved in the development of video and professional development presentations that support policy and advocacy.

Every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information. Internet content, however, does appear, disappear and change over time. CEPI, as a university-based educational policy research institute endorses no specific position of any listed group.

DIVERSE LEARNERS

SEGMENT #5: COLLABORATING WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT

Diverse Learners: Knowledge and understanding of exceptional students, their differences and the teaching approaches required to provide differentiated instruction.

Facilitator: Dr. [Joan Rhodes](#), Assistant Professor
Department of Teaching and Learning
School of Education
Virginia Commonwealth University

AUDIO	VIDEO
<p>There is much to learn in the first years of teaching. As a novice educator, you may find that meeting the needs of all your students is quite challenging. You may even be able to think of one particular student in your classroom that continues to be puzzling. Seeking the assistance of experienced colleagues and other educational professionals specifically trained to meet the needs of diverse learners is a very important step in helping all students within your classroom achieve to their potential.</p> <p>My name is Joan Rhodes. I am a professor in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Today I would like to share best practices for collaborating with other educational professionals within the school to support the diverse learners in your classroom. In this segment we will specifically talk about ways you can seek assistance and collaborate with fellow educators.</p> <p>Within any school there are a variety of personnel that can support you in working with students who have special needs. First, take a survey of your school staff. Does your school have access to an English Language Learning, Reading, Learning Disabilities, or Speech and Language specialist? Along with your grade level colleagues, school administrators and guidance counselor, these specialists can be an excellent resource to assist you with the challenges of dealing with diverse students.</p> <p>Relationship building is a continuous process and the first step in gaining the assistance you need. Friend and Cook, suggest several characteristics of a collaboration to help guide educators when working together. First, collaborative work is voluntary and allows teachers to form informal partnerships with colleagues. It is based on the belief that each individual's contributions to problem solving are equally valued. Collaborative partnerships require a clearly defined and shared goal. In the case of your classroom, you are expecting your collaboration with a resource educator to enhance student achievement.</p> <p>In positive collaborative relationships, decision-making is a shared responsibility. Although you may work on one aspect of the instruction and your partner another, each</p>	<p>DR. RHODES</p>

person has an equal voice in fundamental decisions. Because of this shared responsibility, both partners also have shared accountability for student improvement. Collaboration requires partners to share their resources of time and expertise.

Finally, and worth noting, is the emergent property of collaboration. Great collaborative partnerships don't happen immediately. Rather, across time, teachers come to value, trust and respect each other's opinions and contributions to efforts for improving student learning.

How do teachers form these collaborative partnerships to support the learning of their students? Let's hear from our teachers as they describe the support they gain through collaborating with other educational professionals about student needs.

My name is Christina Stewart and I am a 6th grade Exceptional Education teacher. This is my third year of teaching. I collaborate with one teacher in a unique way. I currently teach one collaborative class with a General Education Teacher. We use a co-teaching approach called "One Teach, One Drift." This is when the General Education teacher takes the primary responsibility for teaching, while the Exceptional Education teacher circulates through the room providing unobtrusive assistance to students as needed. The General Education teacher and I schedule a weekly time to plan for the following week. When we plan, we talk about different activities that we have in mind that may be useful for students. Although the General Education teacher is the primary teacher, I also take a turn at introducing new concepts and ideas. When we plan, we decide which person is going to teach and which person is going to assist students. We share and discuss observations on a regular basis and use our findings to plan future lessons.

**CHRISTINA
STEWART**

My name is Gina Brooks. I teach English and reading in a middle school. This is my third year of teaching. A new teacher's first best friend is a fellow teacher. Sometimes it is a colleague who is also a new teacher; and other times it is a more experienced teacher. I had close friends who were also new teachers at the beginning of my first year of teaching. As the weeks passed, I developed a friendship with a teacher who experienced great success in the classroom. I consulted each for a different purpose my first year. The new teachers provided adjustment support. I was able to confide in them and they understood because they often had the same problems I had. For example, I shared that I did not know how to accomplish all the things I needed to do. I could not control my class during group activity. They, too, had these problems. We were able to share and grow together-experimenting, complaining, expressing openly our frustrations, and finding solutions. The experienced teacher, however, gave me strategies to solve specific problems and helped me obtain appropriate materials. She also helped to keep me calm and understand that my principal and curriculum leaders did not expect me to know EVERYTHING my first year. I soon learned that the leaders in my school were there to help me, too.

GINA BROOKS

As you noted from the video novice teachers benefit significantly from working with veteran teachers, administrators and specialists to support the learning needs of their students. As a new teacher, do not be afraid to seek help. You are an advocate for your students when you find support to meet their needs.

DR. RHODES

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Diverse Learners: Knowledge and understanding of exceptional students, their differences and the teaching approaches required to provide differentiated instruction.

Ask yourself: What do you use to meet the needs of diverse learners in your classroom? How do you differentiate tasks in your classroom?

Suggested use for this module:

1. **Analyze:**

Please select one of the scenarios below and problem-solve a list of possible solutions. Record your ideas in the space provided. Discuss these ideas with your other educators (mentor, colleagues, or other beginning teachers).

2. **View:**

Watch the corresponding video on this topic. How does this information change your ideas?

3. **Compare:**

Revisit the scenario selected. Next, review the section entitled, "Possible Solutions" comparing the ideas listed with your own list.

4. **Reflect:**

How will you apply this new information to your current or future classroom? What goal will you set to help you begin to change your practices? What support is needed to help you accomplish this goal?

5. **Apply:**

List the first step towards change below. Create a timeline for success and place deadlines in your personal planner as a reminder. How will you know when you have met your goals?

Scenarios 1 & 2: Diverse Learners

Scenario 1:

All the students in second grade have the same spelling list (List 3). After the pretest on Monday, the classroom teacher realizes that the list of words was not appropriate for most of the children in the class. Many students had already mastered the words and received a score of 100%. Other students were totally frustrated by the list and unable to spell any of the words. How could this teacher differentiate this task to be more appropriate for all of the students?

Scenario 2:

A middle-school teacher uses whole group instruction everyday to teach his students algebra. He feels uncertain about changing his routine for fear of behavior problems if he tries cooperative learning activities. What could he try to differentiate his learning format? Where should he begin?

Circle the scenario that you selected below:

Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Record a list of your own possible solutions here:

Summary & Goal Setting:

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their teaching approach and how they adjust and present the curriculum. Differentiation also requires thoughtful teacher presentation of the information to learners rather than expecting students to modify the curriculum. Consider student differences and incorporate techniques into your lessons while planning rather than waiting to modify the materials after the lesson has been created. Think about changing either your learning process and/or the student products which are generated to add variety to your lesson plans.

Begin by asking yourself the following questions:

- How will you structure the lesson to meet the needs of students you expect to have difficulties? What supports will you build into your lesson plan?

- How will you structure the lesson to meet the needs of students you know will master the concepts fairly quickly or already know the information presented in the lesson?
- What will you do to keep early finishers (individual students or groups) engaged in instruction?

It can sometimes feel overwhelming to try to differentiate everything in your classroom. Not everything needs to be adjusted or differentiated. Start small by incorporating one or two strategies which will improve your lessons. As you experience success, increase the options that you try with students.

1. Begin with what is essential for learning. What key elements are required for students to be successful with your lesson? 2. Next, consider adjusting the learning process or product within your lesson.

Consider the following options:

- Routines and Formats (Teacher uses a variety of formats during instruction including individual work, partner activities, small group instruction, cooperative learning activities, and whole class instruction)
- Type of Task (Incorporate more authentic and meaningful work assignments versus using worksheets or skill and drill reproducible)
- Stations or Centers (Allow students to rotate to different area of the room and complete problem-solving or hands-on tasks. Once routines have been established, begin working with small groups or conferencing with individual students)
- Create learning scenarios which require students to utilize real-life objects or apply content knowledge to solve everyday problems. Incorporate opportunities for students to research and investigate topics of interest.
- Use activities which are leveled or have different tiers or choices depending on student needs or interests (learning contracts are a helpful tool for managing choices).
- Give interest assessments which help you identify student academic and recreational interests and learning styles. Try to include different learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) into your lessons.
- Do you always assess students in the same way? Why not vary the type of assessment you use. Could students create a graphic organizer, write a letter, or complete a project to demonstrate the depth of their learning?
- Conduct diagnostic assessments to build student growth across time. For example, a reading or spelling inventory will ensure that all learners are in materials at the appropriate level (independent or instructional) rather than working at a frustration level.
- Are you relying too much on the same materials? Don't rely solely on the textbooks. Use literature or trade books, source documents, current events, websites, and songs to promote greater learning.

- Encourage more high-level thinking. Without proper planning, many beginning teachers rely on 'spur of the moment' questions or examples. Use Bloom's Taxonomy to generate questions which require more depth of thinking. Record a couple of questions and examples that students will relate to and place these on index cards next to your teaching location. Access this information periodically during the lesson to keep your expectations high.



ANNOTATED RESEARCH AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ❖ One of the most complex challenges in teacher education and professional development is preparing novices and mentor teachers to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Increasing student diversity, coupled with an emphasis on standards and accountability, has dramatized the need to build expertise in differentiating curriculum and instruction for preservice and inservice teachers.

Brimmijoin, Kay. & Alouf, James. (2003). *New dimensions for building expertise in mentoring and differentiation*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 472630)

- ❖ The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjusting the curriculum. It also requires presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum.

Hall, Tracey. (2002). *Differentiated instruction*. Retrieved September 22, 2007, from http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

- ❖ Practices noted as central to differentiation have been validated in the effective teaching research conducted from the mid 1980s to the present. These practices include effective management procedures, grouping students for instruction, and engaging learners.

Hall, Tracey. (2002). *Differentiated instruction*. Retrieved September 22, 2007, from http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

- ❖ Key elements guide differentiation in the education environment: Content (what a teacher plans to teach), Process (how a teacher plans instruction), and Products (teacher assessment of content).

Differentiated instruction at Memorial Middle School. (n.d.). Retrieved September 22, 2007, from <http://beverlyschools.org/memorial/di/diinfo.htm>

- ❖ Teachers who differentiate instruction focus on their role as coach or mentor, and give students as much responsibility for learning as they can handle. These teachers grow in their ability to (1) assess student readiness through a variety of means, (2) "read" and interpret student clues about learning needs and preferences, (3) create a variety of ways students can gather information and ideas, (4) develop varied ways students can explore and "own" ideas, and (5) present varied channels through which students can express and expand understanding.

The Role of the teacher in a differentiated classroom. (2007). Retrieved September 22, 2007, from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200710161050.html>

- ❖ Differentiating instruction is an essential tool for integrating technology into classroom activities.

Differentiating instruction. (2004). Retrieved September 22, 2007, from <http://members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiatinglinks.html>

- ❖ In preparation for differentiation, the teacher diagnoses the difference in readiness, interests, and learning style of all students in the class, through use of a variety of performance indicators.

Differentiating instruction. (2004). Retrieved September 22, 2007, from
<http://members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiatinglinks.html>

- ❖ The effect of teacher beliefs and perceptions influences the teacher's academic expectations of students with varying academic abilities.

Ehlers, Kristy. & Montgomery, Diane. (1999). *Teachers perceptions of curriculum modifications for students who are gifted.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED429750)

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